DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 261 440 CS 505 057

AUTHOR McCrady, William
TITLE Listening and the Learning Disabled Student.
PUB DATE [82]
NOTE 34p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Attention; Cognitive Processes; Elementary Secondary Education; Language Processing; *Learning Activities; *Learning Disabilities; *Listening; *Listening Comprehension; Listening Habits; *Listening Skills; *Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

In order to foster awareness of the auditory characteristics of learning disabled students and the essential skills involved in effective listening, this paper suggests teaching strategies to improve listening skills that include both individual and whole class activities specifically geared to learning disabled students. The first section of the paper profiles five students labeled as learning disabled. In the second section, listening is defined as the ability to perceive an auditory message and gain as much information from that message as possible. Steps toward understanding the listening problem, outlined in the third portion of the paper, include finding an area of interest, being flexible about notetaking, and working at listening. Sample lessons and activities that present listening as an enjoyable challenge are discussed in the fourth section, while five suggestions for developing listening as a study skill are presented in the fifth section. The paper concludes with five guidelines, such as presenting regularly scheduled lessons about listening at least twice a week and being a good model as a listener. (DF)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED261440

LISTENING AND THE LEARNING DISABLED STUDENT

William McCrady

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
William F. McCrady

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CS 505 057

ABSTRACT: LISTENING AND THE LEARNING DISABLED STUDENT

This article on listening skills contains a brief examination of the auditory characteristics of learning disabled secondary students, a catalogue and description of the essential skills involved in effective listening, and some suggested teaching strategies to improve listening skills. These suggestions will include both individual and whole class activities specifically geared to learning disabled students.

Some school districts in the U.S. have developed comprehensive listening guides. A number of these have been researched, along with recent journal articles that deal specifically with listening problems of learning disabled students. Such current research is the basis for the findings and suggestions in this article.

William McCrady
9905 Durango Drive
Damascus, MD 20872
Phone: (301) 253-2347

OVERVIEW

Listening and the Learning Disabled Student

I. Introduction: Who's Listening? Who Cares?

II. What is Listening?

III. Deeper into the Problem: A Classic Study.

IV. Introductory Lessons: Exploring and Developing Listening Skills.

V. Listening as a Study Skill.

VI. Some Final Suggestions.

LISTENING AND THE LEARNING DISABLED STUDENT

by William McCrady

I. Who's Listening? Who Cares?

Perhaps no academic skill is as neglected and taken for granted in today's schools as is the art of effective listening. The oft-quoted Rankin study of 1927 found that we spend forty-five percent of our communication time listening, compared to nine percent writing and sixteen percent reading. More recent studies show that the secondary school student is required to spend 50% to 60% of his classroom time on listening. Yet while bored, inattentive, and disruptive students are the primary complaint of most secondary teachers, few teachers have any formal training in listening/communication strategies that could remedy this very complaint.

In the secondary L.D. classroom, the listening problem is not diminished by the presence of a smaller number of students and a more highly trained teacher. On the contrary, the auditory/receptive deficiencies of some students, the variety of learning/listening styles of the individual students, and distractibility of certain L.D. students all can contribute to a potential communication nightmare. Consider the following guided tour through a small but representative eleventh grade L.D. English class.

Mickey, an athletic, formerly hyperactive young man of 17, possesses a WISC IQ score in the moderately bright range, exceptional inferential ability, a strong auditory vocabulary, and a fairly wide base of general knowledge. He is, however, the classic overstimulated listener. His answers to teacher questions, although correct only about 50 percent of the time, are often shouted out before the teacher has finished asking the question. He is often intolerant of other students' wrong answers, or their need to take some time to think before answering. He enjoys shouting out opinions or answers before the other students have their chance. If his answers or opinions are off target, he often retreats

into a defensive "who cares" role or drops out of the discussion.

Helena is a conscientious but auditorily handicapped student. She enjoys learning, but must have most questions repeated, and would always prefer to see them in writing. Though her hearing is normal, she learns much better through visual and tactile/kinesthetic experiences than through listening. Her auditory vocabulary and understanding of idiomatic expressions are both poor for her age. Yet she is very interested in improving her listening speaking skills in order to become a successful businesswoman.

Arnold is a mostly mainstreamed student who reads on grade level, loves school, but is often confused by such rapid fire exchanges of ideas as can occur in a secondary classroom discussion. Polite to a fault, he is often hesitant to tell the teacher when he is becoming lost or confused. Most directions have to be repeated for him two or three times. He often does not get a chance to answer a question by the teacher because it often gets answered first by Mickey. Arnold is a hardworking, conscientious listener who needs to improve his listening efficiency.

Bernice, a former non-reader who after years of remedial reading instruction now reads at a low third grade level, is socially adept and skilled at picking up non-verbal nuances and vocal intonations. If the topic at hand interests her or appears relevant to her, she is perhaps the most perceptive listener in the class. However, if the topic being discussed does not seem relevant to her immediate mood or situation, she usually turns it off rapidly, and can be seen doing unrelated written work or putting her head down on the desk. Bernice is the classic disinterested listener.

Jim is, despite the efforts through the years of a series of reading teachers, a virtual non-reader. Yet an observer would scarcely be aware of that fact from watching him during a typical day in his English class. He is nearly always attentive, makes perceptive and relevant comments during discussions, and has a good auditory and speaking vocabulary. He enjoys listening to taped materials

and is very successful in learning from these and any other auditory sources. Jim is a student who will need to continue to build up his auditory strengths, since the prognosis for him as a reader is poor.

Our final student, Raymond, is a fifth grade reader who nevertheless enjoys all aspects of high school language arts. Although fraught with misspellings and usage errors, his writing is always interesting, honest, and substantive. As a listener, he is consistently the most attentive and perceptive in the class. He rarely contributes to class discussion without being called upon, but when he does speak, his opinions and reactions are often so intelligent, profound, or strangely worded as to require the teacher's explication for the benefit of the other students. Raymond is the mature listener who is able to find a personal area of interest in seemingly irrelevant or difficult topics. His challenge is to find ways to share his strengths and perceptions with the rest of the class.

None of the above students has any sort of hearing impairment. All are of near normal intelligence. Yet the teacher who will be working with them has an obvious challenge: to help them improve their listening habits and skills so that they can learn from the teacher and from each other. Thus emerges the theme of this chapter: helping our L.D. students become more caring as well as more skilled listeners.

II. What is Listening?

A brief definition of the term "listening" is in order here. "Listening" presupposes and includes normal hearing ability, but is of course much more. Listening, for the purposes of this chapter, is the ability to perceive an auditory message, and gain as much information from that message as possible. Included in listening are the following (often interdependent) skills (Devine, 1982):

1. Determining one's own purpose for listening.
2. Guessing the speaker's purpose.
3. Following the sequence of the presentation.
4. Noting key details.
5. Following directions.
6. Guessing the plan of organization.
7. Picking up signal and transition expressions.
8. Noting the speaker's main points.
9. Using a listening guide.
10. Keeping track of the main points through some form of notetaking.
11. Distinguishing relevant from irrelevant material.
12. Noting bias and emotional appeals.
13. Distinguishing between fact and opinion.
14. Making inferences (drawing conclusions) from a presentation.
15. Predicting possible test questions from a lecture presentation.
16. Summarizing the speaker's gist.
17. Formulating intelligent questions about new or difficult parts of the presentation.

All of the above will be referred to directly or indirectly in the course of this chapter. For teachers who prefer or feel they need unit and behavioral objectives to teach listening, all of these skills can be changed into such objectives through minor semantic revisions. It is this author's bias, however, to guard against any attempt to teach any of these skills in isolation or as a discrete objective. All of the learning activities found later in this chapter address at least several of the above and often all of them simultaneously. By the same token, there is no need for a teacher to attempt and succeed with all of the suggested activities. The skillful teacher will sense those activities which fit the teacher's style and the student's individual and group needs. The intent here is to teach the whole listener and address his particular needs--

not to fragment listening into isolated skill units and teach each one separately.

III. Deeper into the Problem: A Classic Study

A necessary step toward understanding the listening problem is an examination of the behavior characteristics of good and poor listeners. In the late 1950's, Ralph G. Nichols, co-author of the book Are You Listening? (McGraw Hill, 1957), did such a study at the University of Minnesota.. After testing to discover the 100 "best" and 100 "worst" listeners in the freshman class at the university, he examined each group to determine what habits or skills made the two groups so different. He discovered ten crucial points of contrast which are explained below (Nichols, 1957):

A. Finding an area of interest.

The poor listeners in the study usually declared the subject matter of most talks dry after the first few sentences, and used this judgment to justify not paying attention. The good listeners, on the other hand, agreed that many talks are indeed dry or sound uninteresting, but concluded that, being trapped anyway, it is a good idea to try to learn anything that they could later put to use. They made the best of a potentially boring situation, and usually learned something new as well, rather than merely sleeping, whispering to friends, or day dreaming. They made themselves become interested by trying to find something in the topic that they could use or profit from.

B. Judging content, not delivery.

This second point is closely related to the first. The poor listeners often rationalized their inattention by criticizing the speaker's boring speaking style and/or socially inept demeanor. Again, the good listeners generally agreed with these judgments, but were able to tell themselves, "Wait a minute--I'm not really concerned with this person's personality or delivery. I want to find out what he knows." Thus the good listeners were more able to tolerate or ignore a speaker's distracting eccentricities or humdrum style.

C. Avoiding overstimulation.

Many of the poor listeners were the types who become too excited too soon by what the speaker has to say. Early in the talk, they might be doing any or all of the following: calculating what hurt is being done to their own pet ideas, forming an embarrasing question to ask the speaker, or interrupting the speaker to ask about something that the speaker was about to address had he been given the time. The good listeners, while often threatened with this same overstimulation, were able to hold back their questions until the speaker had come to a natural stopping point. Any teacher who has had to say "I'm getting to that" time and again to certain students knows the disruptive capability of the overstimulated listener.

D. Listening for key ideas.

Mastery of this behavior is essential for efficient notetaking. The poor listeners in study tended to try to memorize or write down far too many of the facts from a presentation, thereby missing many of them and, more importantly, becoming frustrated by the whole idea of notetaking. The good listeners had the skill of waiting for central ideas and recording mainly those facts that are relevant or essential to understanding them. These good listeners recognized and made use of conventional organizational patterns, transitional expressions, and the speaker's use of repetition to determine the key ideas.

E. Being flexible about notetaking.

Amazingly, the 100 poor listeners, while poor notetakers themselves, somehow felt that all notes must be in outline form. The 100 good listeners, by contrast, often had four or five notetaking systems they had developed, and could adjust their notetaking volume and organization according to the speaker's content and organization (or lack thereof). They realized that many lecturers are simply not well enough organized to be outlined, or that there is often not enough time during a lecture to construct a careful outline. Again, it is no wonder that poor listeners become easily frustrated by what they see as the

task of notetaking.

F. Working at listening.

Real, attentive listening is marked by an elevation of the pulse, quicker circulation of the blood, and a small rise in body temperature. Many of the poor listeners in Nichol's study, however, seemed to perceive the listener as merely a sponge, willing only to take in information they heard through mental osmosis, but unwilling to put forth any effort to gain it or understand it. Listening is in fact hard work, and the good listeners perceived it as such. Their eye contact, facial expressions and posture while listening usually indicated that they were indeed interested in what they were hearing.

G. Resisting distractions.

Rare is the classroom that is consistently quiet, and not frequently interrupted by various distractions, many of them external and most of them man-made. The poor listeners tended to tolerate distractions and even created a few themselves. The good listeners saw it their duty to do something about distractions: ask the speaker to talk louder, close a window or door, drive out or silence the buzzing wasp, etc. Again, they took an active part in the communication process.

H. Exercising the mind.

Just as listening is hard work, the more a person listens, and the greater the variety of listening materials he has heard, the stronger and more adept at listening he/she becomes. Most of the poor listeners Nichols studied were "inexperienced"; that is, they were mainly used to light, recreational listening material (e.g., radio music), and had little experience with anything "tough, technical, or expository." The good listeners, meanwhile, seemed to have an appetite for both a varied and difficult presentation, and did not always expect to be entertained.

I. Keeping an open mind.

With all listeners, but more so with poor ones, certain "emotional deaf

spots" can occur. These are often caused by certain "red flag" words or phrases that sidetrack the listener onto an emotional tangent, and prevent accurate and objective perception of a message. In the 1950's, according to Nichols, such red flags included "mother-in-law," "landlord," "sharecropper," "pervert," "income tax," "communist," "evolution," "square," and "punk." In my experience as an English and special education teacher in the 1980's, I would add to the list "homework," "Shakespeare," "write it out," and "grammar." In effect, these terms cause many listeners to become overstimulated in a way that distracts them from the speaker's intended message, and often without the listener's realizing that this miscommunication is occurring. Poor listeners are, of course, more often victimized by red flag terms, although no one is immune to their influence.

J. Capitalizing on thought speed.

The average person's speech rate is about 125 words per minute, yet according to Nichols, the average person's thinking speed is the equivalent of 500 words per minute. This discrepancy causes a two edged problem. For poor listeners, it leads to and is a ready excuse for daydreaming and distraction. But for the good listener, the thought speed advantage actually presents a challenge: to apply the extra time to weighing what the speaker has said, formulating questions (both to clarify and to evaluate), anticipating what might be said next, making inferences, and learning from the speaker's body language. Thus the thought speed advantage has an important implication for presenting lessons to the L.D. student, as we shall see in the section on using taped materials later in this chapter.

No human being falls into the category of "good listener" in all of the above skill areas. Conversely, the poorest listeners in our classrooms have at least one or two of the strengths listed above. It is probably wise to evaluate each of one's students' strengths and weaknesses according to the above ten criteria early in the school year, and then create (or select from the ones in this chapter) appropriate individual and group lessons and strategies. Day-

to-day teacher observation is probably still the most effective way of evaluating a student's listening behavior, yet for those teachers desiring a more objective measure of listening skill, the following two tests can be recommended: the Brown-Carlsen Listening Comprehension Test, originally published by the World Book Company in 1955; and the STEP Listening Comprehension Test (Educational Testing Service, 1956).

Enough of the theoretical background on listening. We turn now to a catalogue of lessons specifically designed or adapted for use in the secondary L.D. classroom. Although some of them are obviously best suited for the English/language arts classroom, most are intended as aids or methods of learning the content in any secondary school class, whether special ed. or mainstream. In the first section, "Introductory Lessons," the main intent is to introduce the complexity and challenge of the listening progress, make the student aware of his own strengths and weaknesses as a listener, and help the student become a more accurate listener. In the second section, the emphasis is on listening as a tool for greater success in the content areas--listening as a study skill.

IV. Introductory Lessons: Exploring and Developing Listening Skill.

The sample lessons and activities listed in this section are as much motivational as they are educational. If listening is presented as an enjoyable challenge at the outset, chances for later success are probably greater. After each sample, the reader will find a list of the skills in section II of this chapter ("What is Listening?") that the activity will develop, and the headings of the 10 listening behaviors in the previous section to which it relates.

1. Have the class listen to very short, enigmatic stories (on tape or read by the teacher). The class is then asked to answer a question at the end of the story which can be answered only by careful listening to the details in the story and then making an inference. Here are two examples:

Down by the Riverside

A blind girl went down to the river at the edge of town in order to listen

to the river. When she arrived at the river bank, she heard some water splashing. Bending down to touch the ground, she knocked a pebble over the side of the bank. In a few seconds, she stepped back. The color had drained from her face. Why?

One of Those Nights

Jerry Martin rushed into the house at the sound of the second clap of thunder. His mother and sister were putting the supper dishes away as he passed through the kitchen. He gave his mother a nervous glance. She did not look worried, but his sister Mary did.

When the flash of light lit up the living room five minutes later, Jerry grunted and clapped his book shut. A little gasp escaped from his mother. Everybody hesitated, and then started moving. Mary and Mrs. Martin quickly grabbed some objects out of the dining room table.

"Owww!" cried Mary. "That wax burned my fingers!"

At just about the same moment Mr. Martin bruised his shins against the staircase. "Brother!" he grumbled. "Let's get to bed."

What had happened? What was the reason for the Martins acting as they did? (Myers, 1979).

An alternative activity of this type is to read to the class mini-mysteries that appear in each edition of Scholastic Scope Magazine. Always there is a hidden clue as to who was guilty or how the detective was able to solve the crime. Often these stories and mysteries must be read to the students more than once.

Skills developed: (3) Noting key details; (11) Distinguishing relevant details; and (14) Making inferences.

Behaviors addressed: D. Listening for Key Ideas; F. Working at Listening; H. Exercising the Mind; and J. Capitalizing on Thought Speed.

2. Have the students explore our listening environment by taking them outside (or perhaps just opening the classroom windows), asking them to listen

for the sounds in their environment, and then having them make a list of them. After the students have written their lists, have them write (or give orally) a brief emotional reaction to each sound. Ask them then to check each sound that was not present when Columbus discovered America. How many of these are there in proportion to the whole list? Finally discuss their reactions and findings. This activity can be an enlightening experiment on distractions and noise pollution in our world. (Berger and Werdmann, 1978).

As an enrichment activity related to the above exercise, the teacher may want to tape record various sounds (birds, lawnmowers, running water, an electric razor, etc.) and have the students guess what each one is. (Berger and Werdmann, 1978.) This sort of activity is probably best for grades 9 and below.

As a follow-up for older or advanced students, the teacher might read and/or copy selections of the article on noise pollution, "Urban Din Fogs the Brain," Psychology Today, May, 1973 (suggested by Weiss, 1982).

Skills developed: (4) Noting key details; (5) Following Directions; and (14) Making inferences.

Behaviors addressed: F. Working at Listening, and G. Resisting distractions.

3. Play the following game with your class. (This is especially recommended for 10th through 12th grade students; the author has used it successfully with groups of teachers in inservice workshops, with groups of mainstream students, and with groups of L.D. students):

Step 1. Take six volunteers and send five of them from the room. At the outset, tell the six only that they will hear an important message,then be asked to relay it accurately to another person.

Step 2. With the rest of the class as an audience, read a 150-250 word, high interest procedural article to the one volunteer who remains in the room; two suggested topics are "how to give first aid for a poisonous snake bite," or "how to evacuate from a burning building." This first volunteer may hear

the information more than once if he/she desires, and may ask questions for clarification. When this volunteer is ready--

Step 3. One of the other five volunteers is called back into the room to hear the information to the third volunteer, and so on until the last one has been called in. This last one is then asked by the teacher to tell the class all he/she can about the article.

Step 4. The teacher re-reads the article, and then leads a discussion of how much of the article survived the chain of communication, how much was lost, how much was changed, and where these losses and changes occurred. This discussion is also a good occasion to bring up non-verbal communication such as gesturing, posturing, and eye movement. For instance, it will probably be noted that the most effective listeners and speakers had nearly 100% eye contact as they relayed the information. Incidentally, it is often profitable to tape record this game so that parts of it can be re-played for discussion.

Skills developed: (3) Following sequence; (4) Noting key details; (5) Following directions; (6) Guessing the plan of organization; (7) Picking up transitions; (8) Noting the main points; (11) Distinguishing relevant information and (17) Formulating intelligent questions.

Behaviors addressed: All except possible E. (Being Flexible About Note-taking) and I. (Keeping an Open Mind).

4. Play the "Ceiling Zero" game (Devine, 1982). Divide the class into two teams. Instruct one team to create an obstacle course (of desks, chairs, tables, books, etc.) the length of the room. Meanwhile the other team must choose one of its members to be the blindfolded pilot, and another to be the air traffic controller. The blindfolded student must start at one end of the room and, guided by voice commands from the controller at the other end of the room, bring his "plane" safely through the obstacles to the controller's end of the room. The teacher may time how long this journey takes if he/she wishes

to make the game competitive. The teams should switch roles for the second half of the game.

Skills developed: (1) Determining one's own listening purpose; (3) Following sequence; (4) Noting details; and (5) Following directions.

Behaviors addressed: C. Avoiding overstimulation; F. Working at listening; G. Resisting distractions; H. Exercising the mind; and J. Capitalizing on thought speed.

5. The following are similar activities related to the theme of following oral directions.

Drawing diagrams. Starting with very simple figures and gradually progressing to more complicated ones, the teacher describes a diagram or design, and the student(s) try to copy it exactly as the teacher has directed. (Devine, 1982). On the following page (Figure 1.), the reader will find a useful set of examples, ranging from "easy" at the top of the page to "more difficult" at the bottom. The teacher is advised to write out clear step-by-step directions before attempting this idea with a class. As a follow up or alternative, this activity may be transformed into a paired learning situation, with one student holding a sheet of designs and giving directions to another student, who attempts to draw the designs accurately.

Assembling paper puzzles. In this activity the teacher cuts up pieces of construction paper which can be re-assembled to form a completed puzzle (Devine, 1982). The pieces should be lettered, numbered, or color coded. As in the above activity, the teacher then has the option of giving directions and having each member of the class put together the puzzle, or (requiring fewer puzzle sets) making this a paired learning activity, with one student giving directions and the other assembling the puzzle.

Visit to home economics. If the necessary arrangements can be made, have your class visit the school's home arts teacher, whom you have previously

Giving and Following Directions

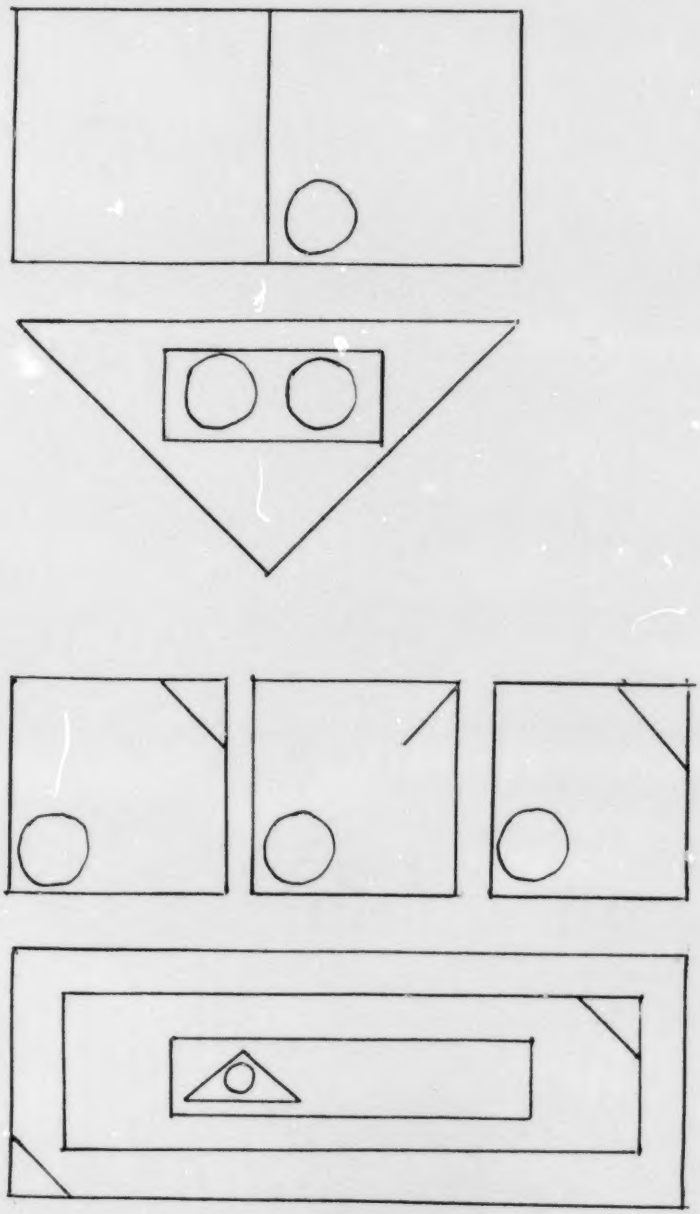

Figure 1. Exercise sheet for Giving and Following Directions (from Devine, 1982)

cajoled into presenting your class a lesson on how to make fudge, brownies, or some other fairly simple but desirable confection. The home arts teacher will give the oral directions, giving you, their regular teacher, a chance to observe the students' listening behaviors.

Tour guiding. As a reward and recognition for success in the above activities, the teacher may wish to select certain students who have mastered "giving and following directions" the opportunity to act as tour guides when visitors arrive to learn about your program. This idea worked wonderfully when the author and his colleagues tried it at our learning disabilities center recently. The visitors' reactions were overwhelmingly positive, and the mature, attentive demeanors of the student guides were gratifying to the teachers.

Skills developed: (1) Determining one's listening purpose; (3) Following sequence; (5) Following directions; (7) Picking up transitional words.

Behaviors addressed: C. Avoiding overstimulation; D. Listening for key ideas; F. Working at listening; H. Exercising the mind; J. Capitalizing on thought speed.

6. The final idea in this section on exploring and developing listening skills will serve as a transition to the next section on listening as a study skill, since it can be used merely to add new variety and experiences to your students' listening menu, or can provide a setting to practice note-taking, questioning, summarizing, and other highly academic listening skills. Whether for enrichment, academic practice, or both, the inviting of guest speakers into the classroom is an essential part of any comprehensive listening program. If the speakers are well chosen, students will appreciate the time and effort their teacher has put into getting the speakers, and the teacher will appreciate the interesting lectures and change in routine. Here is a sample list of speakers used by a Minnesota English teacher (Weiss, 1981):

1. Local policeman in civilian clothes.
2. Crisis Intervention Center telephone counselor from Y.E.S. (Youth Emergency Services).
3. Municipal Ordinance Official-Noise Pollution Monitor.
4. Health nurse on duty at school.
5. Assistant County Attorney.
6. Sign language teacher, local Vo-Tech. school.
7. Counselor for battered wives.
8. State Senator.
9. Counselor on Human Sexuality from Health Clinic.
10. Local Army Recruiter.
11. Spokesman from Bell Telephone Town-Talker Program.
12. Radio disc jockey from two-way Talk Radio Show.

Skills developed: Possibly all 17.

Behaviors addressed: Certainly all ten, and especially A. Finding an area of interest, H. Exercising the mind, and I. Keeping an open mind.

V. Listening as a Study Skill.

In the typical L.D. class, few if any of the students can read at grade level, most if not all are seriously disorganized in their study habits, and all tend to become overwhelmed by the constant writing and reading demands of schoolwork. But for most of them, auditory learning is a strength, or at least an area of potential development and a channel through which content can be communicated. For those who are highly distractable and/or learn best through the tactile-kinesthetic modalities, sometimes listening combined with some very specific but rudimentary notetaking formats is the best way for them to learn content. From the start, let it be conceded that teaching notetaking to students who read below the fourth grade level and/or who are total non-writers will probably lead only to frustration, and is not recommended. But

for the rest of our L.D. students, teaching the lessons that follow is certainly worth the effort; it may be found that even if the students do not begin using the techniques right away, they may incorporate them into their learning style in ways we cannot predict and use them (or, even better, personal modifications of them) in later years. Finally, alternative strategies for the severely reading disabled and non-writing students will be suggested. In fact, the first set of ideas do not even involve notetaking, and are appropriate for all students.

1. Accurate Listening Exercises. Early in the year, after introducing listening as an important life skill and doing some of the activities in the previous section, the teacher begins a year long series of short listening quizzes on high interest articles and stories. The questions may be 4-10 in number, and are either true/false or multiple choice, with the choices designated "a," "b," and "c." (It is not recommended to use more than three choices for L.D. students). It is crucial that the questions range from those demanding recall of key details to those that demand comprehending the gist, making of inferences, distinguishing fact and opinion, and predicting outcomes. It is equally important to present both narrative and expository (including procedural) passages in about an equal balance to provide students with a varied menu which approximates what they hear in their regular school classes. Excellent sources of material are McCall Crabbs Standard Test Lessons in Reading (Teacher's College Press, New York, any edition), articles from the daily newspapers, articles from magazines such as Sports Illustrated and Newsweek (for advanced students), and stories from PAL Paperbacks (Xerox Educational Publications, Middletown, Connecticut). These listening quizzes should be given once or twice a week, and scored immediately after administration so that the results and perhaps aspects of the passage itself can be discussed with the students.

A variation on the above activity is to tape the morning newscast from the radio, and make up a five to ten question listening quiz on it featuring questions demanding recall of important details, distinguishing between fact and opinion, and making inferences (Burnham, 1981). The newscast is also ideal material for use in the notetaking exercises which will be taken up shortly.

Skills developed: (1) Setting one's own purpose for listening; (3) Following sequence; (4) Noting details; (5) Following directions; (8) Noting the speakers main points; (12) Noting bias; (13) Distinguishing between fact and opinion; and (15) Predicting possible test questions.

Behaviors addressed: D. Listening for key ideas; F. Working at listening; G. Resisting distractions; H. Exercising the mind; and J. Capitalizing on thought speed.

2. Notetaking methods. Bearing in mind the caveats given at the beginning of this section, there are nevertheless some viable notetaking strategies worth introducing to the L.D. student with some writing proficiency who reads at or above the fourth grade level. The Pauk notetaking system (Pauk, 1974) can be introduced in a number of ways. The basic idea is a two column approach (see Figure two) with an optional third column for summarizing the gist of the notes. The far left column contains key words which may be verbatim from the main body of notes or simply represent main ideas in the body of notes. The middle (or right-hand, if only two columns are used) column is simply the running notes taken on the chapter or presentation. For beginning notetakers, the author gives the students four or five key words for the left hand column, and has them take notes in the right hand column relating only to those key words. More able and advanced notetakers can begin by taking notes at their own discretion down the middle (or right-hand) column, and later pull out a few key words to be written in the left-hand column

Figure Two: Pauk Notetaking Format (Pauk, 1974)

Key Words	Running Notes (middle or right-hand column)	Summary (Optional)
_____		
_____		
_____		
_____		
_____		
_____		

* N.B. -- For homework, as a method of studying the notes, the student can cover the running notes section and ask himself what the key words mean and how they relate to the notes. Then the student can uncover the notes to see if he was right.

directly across from the notes to which they relate. Always it is crucial to emphasize the notes may consist of phrases, abbreviations, and shorthand expressions, and that complete sentences and spelling are not important so long as the notes are legible and decipherable. Many students will at first ask the teacher to slow down a lecture, until they learn that notetaking does not mean copying down nearly every word the teacher says. A good way to wean them away from that misconception is to have them take notes on films, with approximately ten minutes allotted after the film for them to recall what was important and take notes accordingly. Many students will come up with their own unique methods; for instance, one highly intelligent but writing-impaired student drew pictures and diagrams in the running notes section and then described them with key words in the left-hand column. Such innovation should of course be encouraged.

A more structured method of teaching notetaking, highly recommended for use with lengthy, detailed lectures in social studies and science classes, is the listening or notetaking guide. A prime example is Castello's listening guide (Castello, 1976), a partially complete topical outline of the lecture, to be filled out by the students during the lecture. A "preliminary" study (Thomas and Cummings, 1978) in a suburban school system near Phoenix, Arizona indicated that students using it for lecture notes were more on-task than they had been when merely asked to take notes. They also exhibited fewer distracting behaviors, asked more interpretive level questions, showed more communication with each other about the content, took notes in their own language rather than verbatim from the lecture, and gave essay answers on a post-test that were both concise and substantive. The author of this chapter has used similar notetaking guides, wherein the main ideas are supplied as headings and the students are asked to fill in the substantiating and relevant details, with some success. The students generally say they find such guides easy to

Macbeth Review: Discussion Summary

Complete the following web diagram. Begin by placing the main character in the middle circle.

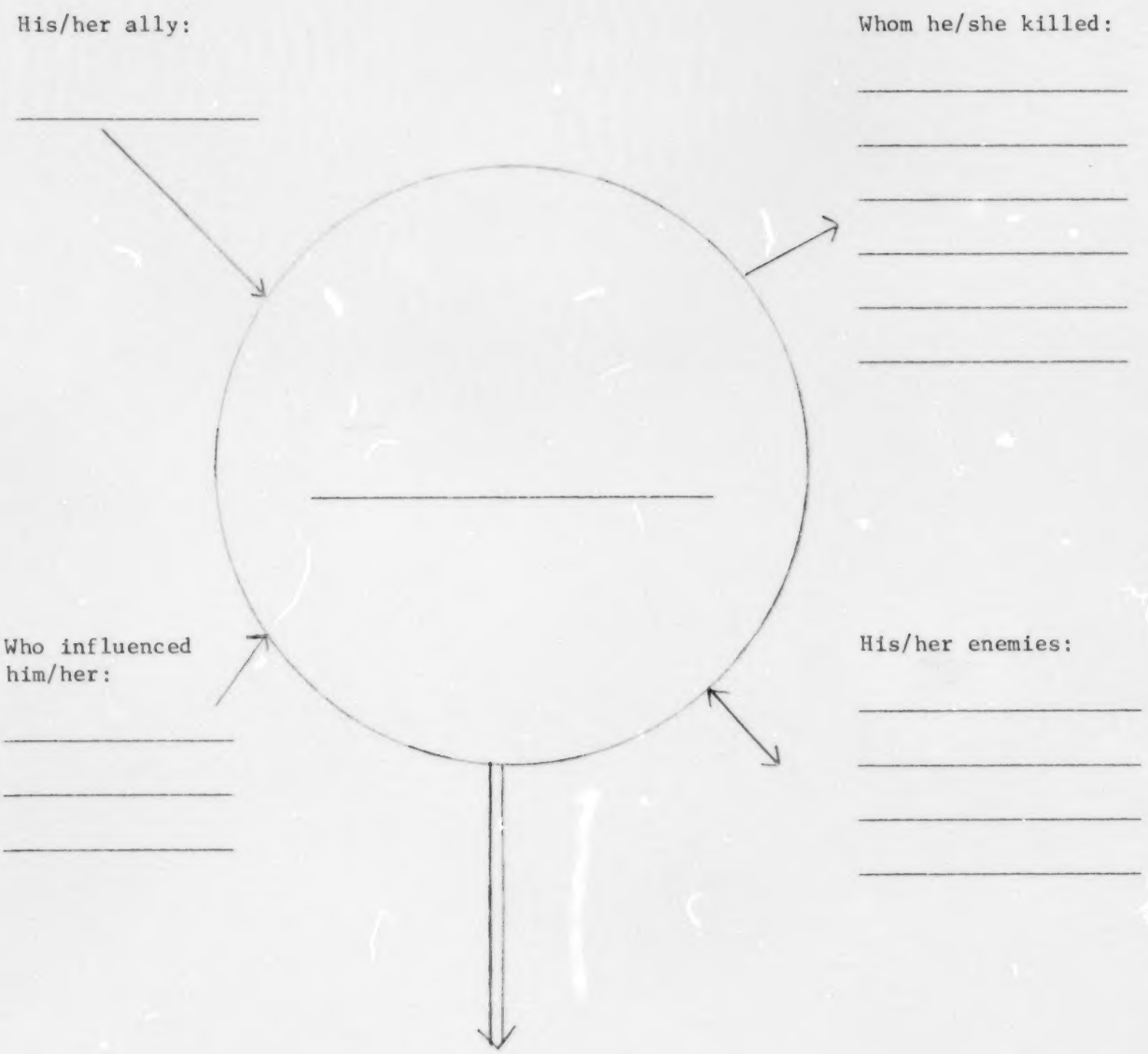

Figure 3.

follow, and they appreciate knowing in advance what area they should take notes on.

One other strategy worth considering is a type of webbing or mapping (Devine, 1982). In this system, the main ideas are represented by key word(s) that are written in a circle with lines radiating outward toward phrases that express related details. (See Figure 3). Many L.D. students appreciate such well-spaced schemes that are verbally sparse and non-threatening in appearance, but which still give the key terms and show the important relationships among ideas.

Skills developed: All seventeen, and especially (8) Noting the speaker's main points; (9) Using a listening study guide; and (10) Keeping track of the main points by notetaking.

Behaviors addressed: All ten, and especially D. Listening for ideas; E. Being flexible about notetaking; and F. Working at listening.

3. Following the Pattern of Discourse.

A sophisticated skill which can be useful in deciding what notes to take when listening is that of noting and following the overall structure of the presentation. This skill can be mastered by some of the more able listeners among L.D. students <u>if</u> they are taught the basic structures and given practice at recognizing and following them. Devine, (1982) lists five basic patterns (structures) of spoken discourse:

a) Simple enumeration (listing).

b) Generalization followed by examples.

c) Time sequence (as in the narration of a story).

d) Cause-effect.

e) Comparison-contrast.

Devine goes on to list the following phrases embedded in spoken discourse which signal to the listener what pattern he is hearing and where the pattern is taking him (its purpose).

Key Signal Expressions

Type:	Usually found in:
Example words	
for example for instance thus in other words as an illustration	generalization plus example (but may be found in enumeration and argumentation)
Time words	
first, second third meanwhile next finally at last today, tomorrow, soon	narration, chronological patterns, directions (and whenever events or examples are presented in a time sequence)
Addition words	
in addition also furthermore moreover another example	enumeration, description, and sometimes in generalization plus example
Result words	
as a result so accordingly therefore thus	cause and effect
Contrast words	
however but in contrast on the other hand nevertheless	comparison and contrast (and whenever speaker makes a comparison or contrast in another pattern)

from Devine, Thomas G. Listening Skills Schoolwide: Activities and Programs, 1982.

The need for L.D. students to practice recognizing signals and following the patterns is obvious; an excellent source of them (for both introduction and practice) is Walter Pauk's reading comprehension text (Six-Way Paragraphs (Jamestown Press, Providence, R.I., 1981). Each of the 100 reading selections in the book falls neatly into one of the five categories, and most of them are high-interest and suitable for oral presentation, discussion of patterns and signal words, and as sources for notetaking. Doubtless the teacher can find many other suitable paragraphs for pattern analysis--for more examples see the suggestions for listening materials on page 16.

Skills developed: (2) Guessing the speaker's purpose; (3) Following sequence; (6) Guessing the plan of organization (7) Picking up transition words; and (11) Distinguishing relevant from irrelevant material.

Behaviors addressed: D. Listening for ideas; E. Being flexible about notetaking; F. Working at listening; H. Exercising the mind; and J. Capitalizing on thought speed.

4. Detecting Bias and Propaganda. Our L.D. students, no less than the rest of us, are bombarded by questionable, intellectually dishonest, and downright illogical statements daily in the form of political messages and advertisements. It is our duty as teachers to sensitize them to the nature of such day to day propaganda through a series of listening lessons. The suggestion that follow are equally appropriate to English or social studies classes, and are geared to the needs of L.D. students.

It is best to start by giving examples of and then defining (or vice versa, suiting the teacher's preference) the major propaganda techniques to which the students are most often exposed. Here is a list of what the author considers major ones, with examples. It would be possible to list and analyze twenty or more propaganda devices, but the following are a good working list for L.D. students:

a. Oversimplification is any generalization which is either unprovable or true only some of the time. "If guns are outlawed, only outlaws will have guns," and "Everyone in Washington loves the Redskins," are two examples overheard in conversation. A toothpaste manufacturers' claim that everyone using that toothpaste will have a better love life is an example from advertising. Hasty generalizations, glittering generalities, stereotyping, and black and white thinking are all types of oversimplification.

b. Appeals to great names. Any testimonial by a sports star, movie or TV star, or other celebrity that he or she uses a product is such an appeal. This technique is widely used in all sorts of advertising (Joe DiMaggio selling coffee-makers, for example), and examples are easily found by students, who usually are quick to see the poor logic of such appeals.

c. The ad hominem agreement, or name-calling. Any attack on the personality of an opponent, rather than on the opponent's ideas, is a form of name-calling. The McCarthyism of the 1950's provides many examples and shows how devastating such attacks can be. The Iranian hostage situation (and many American's reactions to it) contain many contemporary instances of name-calling on both sides of an issue.

d. Plain folks. Almost the opposite of the appeal to great names, this is a technique used by politicians to seem just like plain ordinary people, thereby to increase people's willingness to identify with them and vote for them. Kissing babies, attending county fairs, and having a beer in an Irish bar in Boston are time-honored ways of appearing to be just like the "plain folks."

e. Card stacking. Any argument that is completely one-sided and contains only those points which favor its side is an example of card-stacking. Most countries use this type of propaganda during wartime, emphasizing

victories over the enemy and covering up setbacks and defeats. Car advertisements almost always use examples of card stacking, since they never admit any faults in the vehicles they are trying to sell.

After introducing the above, the teacher's next step should be to provide tape recorded examples of current radio or advertisements and discuss with the students any of the five techniques that are being employed in them. The teacher may also select or have students select magazine advertisements that contain examples of these techniques. The students are now prepared for the following lesson, which, in addition, introduces the concept of emotional appeals to an audience as a ploy related to the above five propaganda techniques.

SAMPLE LISTENING ACTIVITY: Advertising and You

Focus: "Evaluating Television Commercials"

Direction:

Begin the unit by examining ways in which we persuade and influence others. Utilizing advertisements from magazine, newspaper, etc., expose student to various forms of appeal (e.g. sympathy, security, love, status, popularity, etc.) After discussion, students will view a series of TV commercials, (The film, "The Cleo Awards," is an excellent choice). As an alternative, the teacher may want to videotape a series of TV ads. Students should be able to identify the different appeals in each.

After viewing the film or tape, discuss as a class:

1) The various types of appeals utilized.
2) How advertisements (persuasive messages) are geared to a particular audience (e.g. sex, age or social group).
3) How such audience variables as 1) age, 2) sex, 3) occupation, etc., are factors in audience analysis.
4) Ways in which we judge whether the message was successful.
5) The propaganda techniques used in the messages.

Follow-up activities could include a booklet containing various examples of motive appeals and a description of the audience to which the message is geared. Another activity might be allowing students to create their own product and develop an advertisement to sell the product to a specific audience. This advertisement could also be for a real product.

Assessment:

The most effective means of assessment in the area is the use of teacher observation of class discussion.

(Adapted from Basic Listening Skills, Illinois Speech and Theater Association, 1982).

Skills developed: (1) Setting one's own listening purpose; (2) Guessing the speaker's purpose; (4) Noting details; (12) Noting bias and emotional appeals; (13) Distinguishing between fact and opinion; and (14) Making inferences.

Behavior addressed: F. Working at listening; H. Exercising the mind; I. Keeping an open mind.

For teachers desiring more ideas on teaching propaganda techniques, these resources are recommended: Thomas G. Devine's Listening Skills Schoolwide: Activities and Programs. (ED 219789); John F. Schneider's Reasoning and Argument (Holt Rinehart & Winston's Aspects of English series); and Warriner's English Grammar and Composition, Complete Course (see bibliography).

5. Taped materials as study aids. Because their use is already universal in L.D. classrooms and requires little explanation, little mention has been made so far of cassette taped books and lessons. Such tapes are an essential part of the educational program for most L.D. students, and have been for years. A recent study (D'Alonzo and Zucker, 1981) does shed some new light on the future possibilities of these tapes. In the study, taped information was presented to L.D. students at expanded (slower than normal), normal, and compressed (faster than normal) rates. There was no significant difference in the amount of

information an L.D. student was able to retain at any of the three rates of speed. The implication that our students may learn faster through listening to speeded-up presentations is obvious, and should be investigated. There are already electronic devices on the market which will compress an hour lecture into a shorter time frame. Incidentally, another study (Masters and Cornell, 1979), cited by the authors of the above study, found that prior training of students at a compressed rate helped them comprehend more at the compressed rate than students who had no prior training.

In addition to tapes made by teachers and aides, which are always valuable and deeply appreciated by students, there are many resources of excellent quality which are professionally made cassette tape programs. Among the best are:

a. Caedmon (All types of literature)

1995 Broadway
New York, N.Y. 10023

b. Jabberwocky (Literature for English class, grades 6 - 12)

4 Commercial Boulevard
Novato, California 94947

c. Listening Library (All types of literature in several subject areas)

P.O. Box 1
Old Greenwich, Connecticut 06870

d. Reader's Digest (Mostly non-fiction, reading levels 1 - 9)

Educational Division
Pleasantville, New York 10570

For more listings of taped material, see Adele Patterson, "Listening As A Learning Skill," Media and Methods, January, 1979. Finally, there may be a group such as Volunteers for the Visually Handicapped in your area which will make tapes for your students free of charge, provided you pay for or provide the cassette tapes. Individual L.D. students may subscribe to Talking Books, a service of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

VI. Some Final Suggestions

As anyone trained in the remediation of learning disabilities knows, not every one of the six students mentioned at the beginning of this article will respond equally well to all of the activities and lessons presented here. It is the teacher's responsibility to try many different approaches to listening with the entire class, continue those that are successful with the whole class, and select others to employ with individual students on a regular basis. Jim may enjoy learning all of his lessons via cassette tape, while Helena may require only a book or perhaps a videotape, since audiotapes confuse her. Through the teacher's patience, control, and perseverance, Mickey may begin to learn to be a constructive participant in discussions, and Arnold may finally get a word in edgewise. Bernice may eventually broaden her areas of interest, and Raymond increase his ability to give explanations by building on his capability for following those he hears. The process will take time, with much trial and error along the way. To conclude, here are a few essential guidelines for a comprehensive, year-long listening program (some are from Devine, 1982):

a. Present regularly scheduled lessons, at least twice a week.

b. Attempt a variety of listening/notetaking exercises, especially during the first two months of school.

c. Individualize as much as is necessary (e.g. through the use of taped materials).

d. Be a good model. The students know when you are listening.

e. Make listening lessons part of the regular on-going instruction.

Regarding this final point, teamwork among all the teachers who work with your students is a must. If all the teachers and aides emphasize at least some of the skills and habits presented here, your listening programs' effect will be greater than the sum of its parts, since skills will be reinforced in many different situations. Far from being neglected, listening will be the keystone of your programs.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chapter on Listening and the Learning Disabled Student

"Basic Listening Skills." Illinois Speech and Theater Association. Illinois State Board of Education, Springfield, Illinois, September, 1982. ED 220894

Berger, Allen and Werdmann, Ann. "Listening and Auding Activities and Research." English Journal. May, 1978, pp. 36-39.

Burnham, Larry D. "To Hear or Not to Hear." Teacher. Vol. 96, no. 5, January, 1981, pp. 68-69.

Castallo, Richard. "Listening Guide--A First Step Toward Notetaking and Listening Skills." Journal of Reading. Vol. 19, no. 4, January, 1976, pp. 289-290.

D'Alonzo, Bruno J. and Zucker, Stanley H. "Comparison of Comprehension Scores of Learning Disabled High School Students for Content Presented Aurally at Variable Rates of Speech." Perceptual and Motor Skills. Vol. 53, 1981, pp. 499-505.

Devine, Thomas G. Listening Skills Schoolwide: Activities and Programs. National Council of Teachers of English, Urbana, Ill., 1982. ED 219789

Myers, R.E. "Rediscovering Listening: It's Basic and It's Free." Clearinghouse. Vol. 53, no. 4, December, 1979, pp. 183-185.

Nichols, Ralph G. "Listening is a Ten Part Skill." Nation's Business. July, 1957.

Patterson, Adele. "Listening as a Learning Skill." Media and Methods. January, 1979, pp. 18-20.

Pauk, Walter. How to Study in College. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974.

Schneider, John L. Reasoning and Argument. (Aspects of English Series) New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967.

Thomas, Keith J. and Cummings, Charles K. "The Effic y of Listening Guides: Some Preliminary Findings." Journal of Reading. May, 1978, pp. 705-709.

Warriner, John E. and Griffith, Francis. English Grammar and Composition, Complete Course. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1977.

Weiss, Harvey. "Effective Listening:" Curriculum Guide, High School. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English Spring Conference, April, 1982, ED 218610